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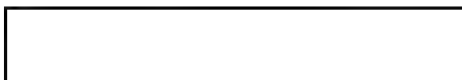


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Laos: Disquiet among Lao leaders over future US policy in Southeast Asia appears to be growing.

In a recent talk with Ambassador Sullivan, King Savang expressed fear that President Johnson's decision not to seek re-election would disturb the continuity of US policy in Indochina. The King stated that Laos and other countries in the area which had thrown in their lot with the US might be cast adrift by a new administration in Washington.

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Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma took a similar line during recent meetings with Lao military leaders.



Souvanna may have overstated his concern in order to galvanize the military into making much-needed reforms. Nevertheless, it is almost certain that he shares the King's uneasiness regarding the US commitment in Southeast Asia. Both leaders have long recognized that Laos' fate is inextricably tied to the situation in South Vietnam.

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Chile: There is again serious talk about an alliance between the left wing of President Frei's Christian Democratic Party and the Communists.

Radomiro Tomic, who returns this week from his post as ambassador to the US, is considering a broad leftist movement, including Communists, with himself as its head and presidential candidate in 1970. His re-entry into Chilean politics will strain the fragile unity of the Christian Democrats, who are already split over the degree of support they should give Frei's economic stabilization and reform program.



RADOMIRO TOMIC

Fernando Sanhueza, second vice president of the party and a member of the left wing, recently praised Tomic as offering the alternative of a more revolutionary and efficient government. He stated that an alliance between the Christian Democrats and the Communists would permit "radical changes" that Chile needs, including nationalization of the US-based copper companies. He added that he saw no danger in such an alliance.

The Chilean Communists currently are being wooed by several leftist parties. President Frei recently made a deal to get their support for his controversial wage readjustment legislation, and, in the process, removed an important stabilization provision. Should the left wing decide to break with the rest of the Christian Democratic Party, the Communists probably would extract stiff concessions before they joined any alliance.

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*Sierra Leone: Army troops stationed in Freetown mutinied early today, apparently against the officer corps.

Small arms and automatic weapons fire, heavy at times, continued for several hours in the capital before dying down. All members of the ruling military-police junta are reported under arrest or shot, except for the army commander. The mutineers are apparently in complete control. Freetown is quiet. All US citizens are reported safe.

The motive behind the mutiny is not clear, but an upcountry mutiny of one army company late yesterday may have sparked the Freetown revolt. The discipline and morale of the Sierra Leone army have been deteriorating for some time, and some enlisted men are known to have recently complained that the officer corps was enriching itself at the expense of the troops.

Some soldiers say Col. Bangura, an adherent of the former opposition party, the All People's Congress, will return from exile in Guinea to take over the army. If true, this may indicate that party leader Siaka Stevens, also in Guinea, may return to head a new government.

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NOTES

USSR: The Soviets are getting full mileage out of their naval visit to India by taking the opportunity to visit other countries in the Indian Ocean area. Three Soviet ships that arrived at Mogadiscio on 17 April reportedly also will stop at Tanzania, Southern Yemen, and Ethiopia. The Soviet Navy previously has called at Ethiopia, but these are the first naval visits to the other countries.

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*Yugoslavia: Alleged growing dissatisfaction with President Tito's "ineffectiveness" and his "grandiose foreign travels" have reportedly led a group of high-ranking party officials to consider means of consigning him to figurehead status.

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the group is made up entirely of Serbs, who say they are backed by leaders of other republics. Some of Tito's closest subordinates are also said to be involved. Although Tito's subordinates probably have no immediate hope of brushing him aside, growing disenchantment with his precipitous foreign policy actions and troubles in the Yugoslav economy.

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